

## **Time-bound Programmes for the Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labour**

During its nearly ten years of existence, the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has gained extensive experience in mobilizing global action to combat child labour. In all IPEC participating countries, policies and programmes are implemented to prevent child labour and withdraw children from work. To ensure that they do not return to work, these children receive rehabilitation services and educational alternatives and their families, when needed, are provided viable support, such as income-generating opportunities.

IPEC country programme activities have continued to evolve and grow over this period, from an early focus on small projects to the current emphasis on large-scale, integrated national and regional programmes. IPEC's engagement in over 75 countries has provided opportunities for the replication of successful approaches and the fine-tuning of strategies and methods. IPEC also has helped build coalitions against child labour through cooperation and collaboration with governments, employers' and workers' organizations, partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the international donor community and multilateral agencies such as UNICEF and the World Bank.

According to ILO estimates, there are approximately 250 million working children around the world, many of whom are victims of the worst forms of child labour. These "worst forms" include slavery, bonded labour, drug trafficking, prostitution, pornography, armed conflict and all types of hazardous work that pose serious risks to a child's safety, health and development. The strong link between poverty and child labour is well established; thus, it is not surprising that children engaged in the worst forms of child labour almost invariably come from the poorest and most vulnerable groups of society.

### **Why focus on the worst forms?**

There is not only a growing consensus that targeting the worst forms of child labour is morally justified, but experience has shown that it is also an effective way to mobilize society to address the problem of child labour as a whole. Successful measures against the worst forms of child labour often have a multiplier effect that benefits other working children. Once governments and civil society begin focusing on the worst forms of child labour, broad discussions about the acceptability of other forms of child labour and the feasibility of eliminating them generally follow.

Indeed, this thinking was a principal motivation behind the adoption of ILO Convention No.182 on the worst forms of child labour<sup>1</sup>. Member states that ratify it commit

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<sup>1</sup> Unanimously approved by the ILO's membership at the International Labour Conference of June 1999.

themselves to prohibit and eliminate worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency through time-bound measures. The exceptionally rapid rate of national ratification of Convention No. 182 - more than one-third of the ILO's 175 member states in less than two years - means that an ever-growing number of governments are committed to eradicating the worst forms of child labour as quickly as possible and preventing them in the future. To demonstrate that the worst forms of child labour can be eliminated within a specific timeframe, IPEC has designed a new, integrated "**Time-bound Programme**" (TBP) approach, drawn from its own extensive experience and that of its many partner organizations worldwide. Such programmes are being launched in three countries – El Salvador, Nepal and Tanzania – which have expressed a particularly strong commitment towards eradicating the worst forms of child labour.

**ILO Convention No. 182 calls for time-bound measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labour**

Countries that ratify Convention No. 182 must take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency, including time-bound measures to:

- prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour;
- provide direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration;
- ensure access to free basic education and appropriate vocational training for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour;
- identify and reach out to children at special risk;
- take account of the special situation of girls.

(Source - ILO Convention No. 182, Articles 1 and 7)

## **What is a Time-bound Programme?**

### **Clear goals – specific targets – defined time-frame**

The Time-bound Programme is essentially a set of tightly integrated and coordinated policies and programmes to prevent and eliminate a country's worst forms of child labour within a defined period of time. It is a comprehensive approach that operates at many levels, including international, national, provincial, community, and individual or family. TBPs emphasize the need to address the root causes of child labour, linking action against child labour to the national development effort, with particular emphasis on economic and social policies to combat poverty and to promote universal basic education and social mobilization.

An important feature of a TBP is "country ownership", meaning that the programme is activated and led by the country itself. Official commitment sets it in motion, creates the

structure through which it will be implemented, and provides resources. IPEC, with the support of the international community, backs this commitment with additional financial resources and technical assistance.

Eliminating child labour's worst forms will require a national commitment to implement a series of complementary policy measures designed to withdraw and rehabilitate working children and prevent at-risk children from becoming child labourers. National commitment involves more than government support for action, however. It includes the participation of the social partners. Convention No. 182 states that the identification of hazardous child labour, the design of programmes, and the monitoring mechanism shall be established in consultation with workers' and employers' organizations and other civil society groups.

#### **Fundamental elements of Time-bound Programmes:**

- Strong political will and commitment to policy reforms to address the root causes of the worst form of child labour.
- Linking child labour action with poverty alleviation and efforts to provide accessible, quality basic education.
- Building innovative partnership with governments, international organizations and financial institutions.
- Rapid response measures for prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of the victims of the worst forms of child labour.
- Provision of viable alternatives: education for child labourers, income support for their families.
- Social mobilization and campaigns on the effect of the worst forms of child labour on children and society and on children's rights to protection and education.
- Public accountability of policy commitment and progress made towards the implementation of national policy to combat child labour problem.

### **How does a Time-bound Programme work?**

The time horizon of a time-bound programme is proposed to be between five and ten years, depending on the availability of resources, the prevalence of the worst forms of child labour, the level of local expertise and other circumstances in each programme country. The design and implementation of a TBP will be carried out in phases to allow for assessment, refinement, evaluation, and replication of the programmes.

#### **I. Laying the foundation**

##### ***Setting goals***

The country first identifies the worst forms that exist and sets goals for their elimination within a determined period of time. At this stage, IPEC provides assistance in collecting

and analyzing relevant data, identifying priorities and policy options, and mobilizing local and external resources.

While Convention No.182 specifically designates certain activities as worst forms of child labour, it also covers any work that is “hazardous” to a child’s health, safety or morals. Hazardous situations can arise from the inherently dangerous nature of the work being performed or the working conditions to which a child is subjected. Thus, in individual countries, a wide array of priority worst forms is targeted. The TBP for Tanzania, for example, is focusing on mining, commercial agriculture and prostitution; the one for El Salvador is targeting scavenging in garbage dumpsites, fireworks production, shellfish harvesting and sugarcane production; while the TBP for Nepal aims to eradicate bonded labour, child trafficking, ragpicking, portering, and domestic servitude.

### ***Social mobilization***

The key elements of social mobilisation in TBPs include changing social norms and values against child labour, cultivating high-level political support for the programme, and, harnessing the often considerable energy and resources of civil society. It is important to involve many stakeholders or groups in the process of developing and implementing TBPs. Stakeholders include, but are not necessarily limited to employers’ and workers’ organizations, implementing agencies, affected children and their families, grassroots organizations, non-governmental organizations, local experts and other concerned individuals.

### ***Research and analysis***

In order to map the extent of a country’s worst forms of child labour, a combination of surveys, rapid assessments and research is carried out. This analysis also includes an assessment of the existing educational infrastructure in terms of access to basic education, quality, its relevance for and focus on children engaged in or at risk for the worst forms of child labour, and how well it reaches girls.

## **II. Designing the programme**

### ***National policy paper and programme proposal***

One of the first steps in programme design is the preparation of a national policy paper that summarizes the analysis of data collected, current policies, policy constraints and the legal framework that may affect child labour, existing programmes, and the initiatives of other organizations and donors. This national policy paper serves as the basis for a draft programme document which identifies policy options and proposals for the implementation of a TBP. This paper is presented for discussion at a stakeholders consultation meeting where the objectives for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour are set, along with the indicators and targets of the programme, the responsibilities of the actors involved, a timeline for action, and the required human, institutional, and financial resources for its implementation.

## **III. Programme implementation**

With the programme framework in place, carefully selected projects and interventions to meet the programme's objectives are implemented by local partners, including government agencies, workers' and employers' organisations, and NGOs. IPEC and its national partners will continue to closely monitor and evaluate progress in meeting the TBP objectives.

A manual for policy makers and practitioners on TBPs has been developed to introduce this initiative and facilitate consultation and implementation. The manual presents possible interventions and strategies for addressing the worst forms of child labour. It also aims to promote interventions that could create synergies among different programmes addressing the various causes of child labour. Methodologies to assess performance and revise strategies to achieve programme objectives also are included.

ILO-IPEC has sought expertise from other fields related to child advocacy to ensure that the TBP approach is truly comprehensive in attacking the root causes of child labour. The manual has been reviewed by ILO experts at headquarters, by specialists from other international organizations, such as UNICEF, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization, as well as by academics and researchers working on children's issues or poverty alleviation. Additional input is being sought from stakeholders and local experts in the countries where the Time-bound Programme is being implemented.

#### **IV. On-going programme evaluation**

On-going evaluation is an integral part of the TBP process. During the design phase, evaluations of current ongoing actions will be conducted in order to incorporate lessons learned. During the implementation period, assessments of the impact of TBP actions and activities will be undertaken and methodologies revised, where necessary.

#### **Getting started: TBP pilot countries**

Some preliminary activities have already been undertaken in the three pilot countries to prepare for the implementation of this initiative. These activities have started with the initial collection of child labour data and analysis of economic, social, and political policies affecting child labour.

IPEC experience in **Nepal**, especially with the target groups of Convention No. 182, is extensive. Preparatory activities for the TBP include: seminars to generate greater awareness among constituents and civil society at the regional level; documentation of IPEC and ILO experience in the country, collection of "success stories" in fighting child labour; overview over donor initiatives in areas relevant to the TBP; and rapid assessments to improve the knowledge base on the worst forms of child labour .

**Tanzania** is expected to ratify Convention No. 182 shortly, which makes the launching of the TBP timely. The government has proposed an 80% reduction of child labour over a five-year period in commercial agriculture, mining and sexual exploitation. The final selection of priority target groups will remain open until the completion of the ongoing national survey on child labour and the additional rapid assessments and baseline surveys. Links will be explored with other ongoing ILO efforts, including “Jobs for Africa”, and activities of other agencies as well as bilateral donors in the areas of education, poverty alleviation and debt relief.

IPEC experience in **El Salvador** is relatively recent, but the very high commitment of the government to start a vigorous campaign against the worst forms of child labour is an excellent starting point for the TBP approach . Preparatory activities have been undertaken, including the establishment of an IPEC office, the appointment of a National Programme Manager and the identification of potential core target groups for baseline surveys and rapid assessments.

